



# Massachusetts Department of Higher Education

## POSITION DESCRIPTION

**Official Job Title:** Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Student Success

**Salary Range:** \$145,000 – \$160,000

### **Position Overview**

The Deputy Commissioner for Academic Affairs and Student Success is the Chief Academic Officer for the Department of Higher Education (“DHE”), and reports directly to the DHE Commissioner. The Deputy Commissioner is responsible for developing and overseeing system-wide academic policies, for monitoring campus-level progress on key academic goals, for advancing state-level work on student learning outcomes assessment, and for overseeing academic program approval for both public and independent post-secondary institutions operating in Massachusetts. A key aspect of this role is the ability to work collaboratively with the academic leaders at Massachusetts’ public campuses—especially the nine state universities and fifteen community colleges—in developing, implementing, and monitoring academic policies and plans.

The Deputy Commissioner participates in meetings of the department’s senior staff and serves as staff to the Board of Higher Education’s (“BHE”) Academic Affairs Committee. This position is also the primary point of contact on all academic issues with the Executive Office of Education and the legislature, a key contact for the DHE’s partners in other states and at local and national foundations, and as the liaison to Chief Academic Officers at the state’s public campuses.

### **The Massachusetts Public Higher Education System**

The Massachusetts System of Public Higher Education (“System”) serves approximately 290,000 students annually. The System is made up of 15 community colleges, nine state universities and five University of Massachusetts (“UMASS”) campuses. The five UMASS campuses are overseen by the UMASS Board of Trustees and the 24 other campuses are overseen by the BHE, despite having their own Boards of Trustees. The BHE, together with each respective Board of Trustees, expects all students, faculty, and staff to be held to exacting standards in the performance of their roles and responsibilities.

## **Essential Job Functions**

- **Provides academic leadership and expertise at the system level.**
  - Develops system-wide academic policies, advising the Commissioner and BHE on all System academic matters.
  - Works in partnership with campuses to improve institution-level and system-wide performance as the Commonwealth seeks to become a national leader in public higher education.
  - Ensures the BHE's academic policies and goals are carried out effectively and efficiently, and that strategic planning is aligned with the BHE's goals and objectives.
  - Monitors academic components of campus strategic plans and academic performance metrics to ensure progress on system-wide goals, promoting accountability and transparency in the use of state resources.
  - Oversees academic program review and review of campus recommendations for new degree offerings.
- **Oversees DHE's research, data collection, and reporting functions, including the development of annual reports.**
- **Develops strong working relationships across both public higher education and state government, as well as with national partners:**
  - Works with the Executive Office of Education and key legislators, and serves as the DHE's liaison with academic officers at the Community Colleges, State Universities, and the University of Massachusetts. Interacts with the Department of Early Education and Care ("EEC") and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education ("DESE") on academic related issues that impact higher education.
  - Ensures strong working relationships with the DHE's partners at foundations and in other states, with particular attention to Massachusetts' leadership role in determining college preparedness and in a multi-state collaborative of student learning assessment.
- **Serves as a key member of the Department of Higher Education's leadership team:**
  - Advises the Commissioner on academic matters concerning the DHE.
  - Serves as staff to the BHE's Academic Affairs Committee.
  - Collaborates frequently with the General Counsel to develop, amend, interpret and implement academic policies and regulations.

- Works with senior leadership in DHE in the areas of workforce development, financial aid, and communications to ensure coherence of policies, procedures, and messaging.
- Develops division policy strategies and priorities with the Division of Academic Affairs and Student Success Leadership Team.
- Directs other projects as requested by the Commissioner.

### **Preferred Qualifications**

- **Education and Experience:**

- A terminal degree in an academic field, with academic experience suitable for a senior level appointment is strongly preferred. Consideration may be given to candidates without a terminal degree in exceptional circumstances.
- Significant experience at the senior level in academic administrative position at the campus, system, or governmental level.
- Demonstrated success in managing, training and developing staff.
- Experience working within public higher education.
- Experience working at the campus, system, or governmental level.
- Familiarity with state-level policy issues in higher education.

- **Skills and attributes:**

- Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively with others and achieve consensus and progress on complex issues.
- Superior writing, verbal presentation, analytic and presentation skills.
- Ability to take initiative, use sound judgment to make decisions, resolve problems, and work effectively with all levels of staff and constituents.
- Ability to understand, apply and interpret the provisions of the laws, regulations, policies, and procedures governing agency operations.

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